

In the Claims

Please amend the following claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A method comprising:  
at an interactive television service data center, determining whether to  
inform one or more users of an interactive television service of available  
content during an advertisement being viewed by the one or more users, the  
determining independent of any request by the one or more users for the  
available content, but based at least in part on a search for available  
content having subject matter related to subject matter of the  
advertisement being viewed by the one or more users when the search is  
conducted;

responsive to determining to inform the one or more users of the  
available content during the [an] advertisement, generating a hot key signal  
indicating availability [and a location] of the available [alternate] content;  
and

inserting the hot key signal into a content signal transmitted to the one  
or more users from an interactive television service provider via a network  
with which the one or more users and the interactive television service  
provider are connected.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein determining whether to inform the one or more users of the [an] interactive television service of the available content during the [an] advertisement is based on information supplied by a content provider.

3. (currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the content provider has paid the interactive television service provider to generate and transmit the hot key signal.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein determining whether to inform the one or more users of the [an] interactive television service of the available content during the [an] advertisement is based on information generated by the interactive television service provider.

5. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more users of the interactive television service have paid the interactive television service provider to receive the hot key signal.

6. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more users of the interactive television service have not paid the interactive television service provider to be excluded from receiving the hot key signal.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body

portion having a data field indicating a location of the available [alternate] content.

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the available content is related to content in which the advertisement is presented [currently being viewed by the one or more users].

9. (currently amended) A method comprising:  
at an interactive television service data center, determining whether to  
inform one or more users of an interactive television service of available content [via] while the one or more users are viewing a portion of an  
electronic program guide, the determining independent of any request by  
the one or more users for the available content, but based at least in part on  
a search for available content having subject matter that is related to  
subject matter of the portion of the electronic program guide being viewed  
by the one or more users at the time the search is conducted;

responsive to determining to inform the one or more users of the available content [via an electronic program guide], generating a hot key signal indicating availability [and a location] of the available [alternate] content; and

inserting the hot key signal into a content signal transmitted to the one or more users from an interactive television service provider via a network

with which the one or more users and the interactive television service provider are connected.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 9, wherein determining whether to inform the one or more users of the [an] interactive television service of the available content [via an electronic program guide] is based on information supplied by a content provider.

11. (currently amended) The method of claim 9, wherein determining whether to inform the one or more users of the [an] interactive television service of the available content [via an electronic program guide] is based on information generated by the interactive television service provider.

12. (currently amended) The method of claim 9, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body portion having a data field indicating a location of the available [alternate] content.

13. (currently amended) The method of claim 9, wherein the available content is related to content in which the portion of the electronic programming guide is presented [currently being viewed by the one or more users].

14. (currently amended) A method comprising:

receiving at a user device a hot key signal from an interactive television provider's network, the hot key signal related to an advertisement being viewed by a user of the user device, the hot key signal containing a message field and indicating availability **[and a location]** of available **[alternate]** content;

determining, at the user device, independent of any request by a user of the user device for the available content, but based at least in part on whether the available content is related to the advertisement, whether the hot key signal is relevant to the **[a]** user; **[of an interactive television (TV) provider currently viewing the advertisement]**

responsive to determining the hot key signal is relevant to the user, displaying on a screen a hot key indicating **[an indication]** that the hot key signal has been received; **[and]**

responsive to receiving an indication that the hot key is accepted by the user, displaying on the screen at least part of the message field; and

responsive to receiving an indication of acceptance by the user after the at least part of the message field has been displayed, redirecting the user device to the available **[alternate]** content.

15. (currently amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body portion having a data field indicating a location for the available [alternate] content.

16. (currently amended) The method of claim 14, wherein determining whether the hot key signal is relevant to the user comprises determining whether a destination address for the hot key signal is an address of the user device.

17. (currently amended) The method of claim 16, wherein determining whether the hot key signal is relevant to the user further comprises determining whether the available [alternate] content is related to content in which the advertisement is presented. [currently being viewed by the user.]

18. (currently amended) A method comprising:

receiving at a user device a hot key signal from an interactive television service provider's network, the hot key signal related to an electronic program guide being viewed by a user of the user device, the hot key signal containing a message field and indicating availability [and a location] of available [alternate] content and containing information providing details regarding the available [alternate] content; [determining whether the hot key signal is relevant to a user of the interactive television service provider; and responsive to determining the hot key signal is relevant

to the user, displaying on a screen an indication that the hot key signal has been received.]

determining, at the user device, independent of any request by a user of the user device for the available content, but based at least in part on whether the available content is related to the electronic program guide, whether the hot key signal is relevant to the user;

responsive to determining the hot key signal is relevant to the user, displaying on a screen a hot key indicating that the hot key signal has been received;

responsive to receiving an indication that the hot key is accepted by the user, displaying on the screen at least part of the hot key message field;  
and

responsive to receiving an indication of acceptance by the user after the at least part of the message field has been displayed, redirecting the user device to the available content.

19. (currently amended) The method of claim 18, further comprising displaying [to the user] the information providing details regarding the available [alternate] content automatically.

20. (currently amended) The method of claim 18, further comprising responsive to the user requesting additional information, displaying [to the user] the information providing details regarding the available [alternate] content.

21. (currently amended) The method of claim 18, further comprising responsive to receiving an indication that the hot key is accepted, displaying the available [alternate] content and the information providing details regarding the available content to the user.

22. (currently amended) The method of claim 18, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body portion having a data field indicating a [the] location of the available [alternate] content.

23. (currently amended) A system comprising:  
a content reception, distribution, and switching portion connected with one or more content providers to receive and redistribute interactive television (TV) content;  
a head-end transport portion connected with the content reception, distribution, and switching portion to [and] encode, multiplex and transmit content signals from the content reception, distribution, and switching portion over a network; and



a hot key generation portion to determine whether to inform one or more users of an interactive television service of available content during an advertisement, the determining independent of any request by the one or more users for the available content, but based at least in part on a search for available content having subject matter related to subject matter of the advertisement being viewed by the one or more users at the time the search is conducted, and

responsive to determining to inform the one or more users of the available content during the [an] advertisement, [and] generate a hot key signal indicating availability [and a location] of the available [alternate] content.

24. (original) The system of claim 23, wherein the head-end transport portion receives the hot key signal from the hot key generation portion, and multiplexes the hot key signal with the content signal.

25. (currently amended) The system of claim 23, wherein the hot key generation portion determines whether to inform the one or more users of the [an] interactive television service of the available content during the [an] advertisement based on information supplied by a content provider.

26. (currently amended) The system of claim 23, wherein the hot key generation portion determines whether to inform the one or more users of the

[an] interactive television service of the available content during the [an] advertisement based on information generated by the interactive television service provider.

27. (currently amended) The system of claim 23, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body portion having a data field indicating a location of the available [alternate] content.

28. (currently amended) The system of claim 23, wherein the available content is related to content in which the advertisement is presented. [currently being viewed by the one or more users.]

29. (currently amended) A system comprising:

a content reception, distribution, and switching portion connected with one or more content providers to receive and redistribute interactive television (TV) content;

a head-end transport portion connected with the content reception, distribution, and switching portion to [and] encode, multiplex and transmit content signals from the content reception, distribution, and switching portion over a network; and

a hot key generation portion to determine whether to inform one or more users of an interactive television service of available content via an electronic

program guide, the determining independent of any request by the one or more users for the available content, but based at least in part on a search for available content having subject matter that is related to subject matter of the electronic program guide being viewed by the one or more users at the time the search is conducted, and responsive to determining to inform the one or more users of the available content [via an electronic program guide, and] generate a hot key signal indicating availability [and a location] of the available [alternate] content.

30. (original) The system of claim 29, wherein the head-end transport portion receives the hot key signal from the hot key generation portion, and multiplexes the hot key signal with the content signal.

31. (currently amended) The system of claim 29, wherein the hot key generation portion determines whether to inform the one or more users of the [an] interactive television service of the available content [via an electronic program guide] based on information supplied by a content provider.

32. (currently amended) The system of claim 29, wherein the hot key generation portion determines whether to inform the one or more users of the [an] interactive television service of the available content [via an electronic program guide] based on information generated by the interactive television service provider.

33. (currently amended) The system of claim 29, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the Internet Protocol (IP) data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body portion having a data field indicating a location of the available [alternate] content.

34. (currently amended) The system of claim 29, wherein the [hot] available content is related to content in which the electronic programming guide is presented [currently being viewed by the one or more users].

35. (currently amended) A system comprising:

a tuner, receiver, and demodulator portion and a demultiplexor portion to receive a hot key signal related to an advertisement, the hot key signal containing a message field, and indicating availability [and a location] of available [alternate] content; and

a processor to:

determine whether the hot key signal is relevant to a user of an interactive television (TV) provider currently viewing the advertisement, the determining independent of any request by the user for the available content, but based at least in part on whether the available content is related to the advertisement,

responsive to determining the hot key signal is relevant to the user, display on a screen a hot key indicating [an indication] that the hot key signal has been received, [and]

responsive to receiving an indication that the hot key is accepted, display on the screen at least part of the message field; and

responsive to receiving an indication of acceptance by the user after the at least part of the message field has been displayed, redirect the user to the available [alternate] content.

36. (currently amended) The system of claim 35, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body portion having a data field indicating a location for the available [alternate] content.

37. (original) The system of claim 35, wherein the processor determines whether the hot key signal is relevant to the user based on whether a destination address for the hot key signal is an address of the user.

38. (currently amended) The system of claim 37, wherein the processor determines whether the hot key signal is relevant to the user based on whether the available [alternate] content is related to content in which the advertisement is presented. [currently being viewed by the user.]

39. (currently amended) A system comprising:  
a tuner, receiver, and demodulator portion and a demultiplexor portion to receive a hot key signal from an interactive television service provider's network, the hot key signal related to an electronic program guide, the hot key signal containing a message field, indicating availability of available [and a location

of alternate] content and containing information providing details regarding the available [alternate] content; and

a processor to:

determine whether the hot key signal is relevant to a user of the interactive television service provider currently viewing the electronic program guide, the determining independent of any request by the user for the available content, but based at least in part on whether the available content is related to the electronic program guide, [and]

responsive to determining the hot key signal is relevant to the user, display on a screen a hot key indicating [an indication] that the hot key signal has been received,

responsive to receiving an indication that the hot key is accepted by the user, display on the screen at least part of the message field; and

responsive to receiving an indication of acceptance after the at least part of the message field has been displayed, redirect the user to the available content.

40. (currently amended) The system of claim 39, wherein the processor displays to the user the information providing details regarding the available [alternate] content.

41. (currently amended) The system of claim 39, wherein the processor, responsive to the user requesting additional information, displays to the user the information providing details regarding the available [alternate] content.

42. (currently amended) The system of claim 39, wherein the processor, responsive to receiving an indication that the hot key is accepted, displays a portion of the available [alternate] content to the user.

43. (currently amended) The system of claim 39, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body portion having a data field indicating a [the] location of the available [alternate] content.

44. (currently amended) A machine readable medium having stored thereon a series of instructions, the instructions, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

determine whether to inform one or more users of an interactive television service of available content during an advertisement, the determination independent of any request by the one or more users for the available content, but based at least in part on a search for available content having subject matter related to subject matter of the advertisement being viewed by the one or more users when the search is conducted,

responsive to determining to inform the one or more users of the available content during the [an] advertisement, generate a hot key signal indicating availability [and a location] of the available [alternate] content; and

insert the hot key signal into a content signal transmitted to the one or more users from an interactive television service provider via a network with which the one or more users and the interactive television service provider are connected.

45. (currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 44, wherein determining whether to inform the one or more users of the [an] interactive television service of the available content during the [an] advertisement is based on information supplied by a content provider.

46. (currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 44, wherein determining whether to inform the one or more users of the [an] interactive television service of the available content during the [an] advertisement is based on information generated by the interactive television service provider.

47. (currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 44, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body portion having a data field indicating a location of the available [alternate] content.



48. (currently amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 44, wherein the available content is related to content in which the advertisement is presented. [currently being viewed by the one or more users.]

49. (currently amended) A machine readable medium having stored thereon a series of instructions, the instructions, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

determine whether to inform one or more users of an interactive television service of available content via an electronic program guide, the determination independent of any request by the one or more users for the available content, but based at least in part on a search for available content having subject matter related to subject matter of the electronic program guide being viewed by the one or more users at the time the search is conducted,

responsive to determining to inform the one or more users of the available content [via an electronic program guide], generate a hot key signal indicating availability [and a location] of the available [alternate] content; and

insert the hot key signal into a content signal transmitted to the one or more users from an interactive television service provider via a network with which the one or more users and the interactive television service provider are connected.

50. (currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 49, wherein determining whether to inform the one or more users of the [an]

interactive television service of the available content [via an electronic program guide] is based on information supplied by a content provider.

51. (currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 49, wherein determining whether to inform the one or more users of the [an] interactive television service of the available content [via an electronic program guide] is based on information generated by the interactive television service provider.

52. (currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 49, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body portion having a data field indicating a location of the available [alternate] content.

53. (currently amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 49, wherein the available content is related to content in which the electronic programming guide is presented. [currently being viewed by the one or more users.]

54. (currently amended) A machine readable medium having stored thereon a series of instructions, the instructions, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

receive a hot key signal related to an advertisement, the hot key signal containing a message field, and indicating availability [and a location] of available [alternate] content;

determine whether the hot key signal is relevant to a user of an interactive television (TV) provider currently viewing the advertisement independent of any request by the user for the available content, but based at least in part on whether the available content is related to the advertisement;

responsive to determining the hot key signal is relevant to the user, display on a screen a hot key indicating [an indication] that the hot key signal has been received; [and]

responsive to receiving an indication that the hot key is accepted by the user, display on the screen at least part of the message field; and

responsive to receiving an indication of acceptance by the user after the at least part of the message field has been displayed. [an indication that the hot key has been accepted,] redirect the user to the available [alternate] content.

55. (currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 54, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet having a header portion and a body portion,

the body portion having a data field indicating a location for the available [alternate] content.

56. (original) The machine-readable medium of claim 54, wherein determining whether the hot key signal is relevant to the user comprises determining whether a destination address for the hot key signal is an address of the user.

57. (currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 54, wherein determining whether the hot key signal is relevant to the user further comprises determining whether the available [alternate] content is related to content in which the advertisement is presented. [currently being viewed by the user.]

58. (currently amended) A machine readable medium having stored thereon a series of instructions, the instructions, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

receive a hot key signal from an interactive television service provider's network, the hot key signal related to an electronic program guide, the hot key signal containing a message field, indicating availability [and a location] of available [alternate] content and containing information providing details regarding the available [alternate] content;

determine whether the hot key signal is relevant to a user of the interactive television service provider currently viewing the electronic program guide, independent of any request by the user for the available content, but based at least in part on whether the available content is related to the electronic program guide; [and] responsive to determining the hot key signal is relevant to the user, display on a screen a hot key indicating [an indication] that the hot key signal has been received;

responsive to receiving an indication that the hot key is accepted  
by the user, display on the screen at least part of the message field; and  
responsive to receiving an indication of acceptance after the at least  
part of the message field has been displayed, redirect the user to the  
available content.

59. (currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 58, further comprising displaying to the user the information providing details regarding the available [alternate] content.

60. (currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 58, further comprising responsive to the user requesting additional information, displaying to the user the information providing details regarding the available [alternate] content.

61. (currently amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 58, further comprising responsive to receiving an indication that the hot key is accepted, displaying a portion of the available [alternate] content to the user.

62. (currently amended) The machine readable medium of claim 58, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body portion having a data field indicating the location of the available [alternate] content.